Amendments To The Claims

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1.   (Withdrawn) A method of ranking offerings offered by at least one on-line vendor, comprising:

       operating a ranking module affiliated with a first entity;

       receiving a search parameter of a user;

       identifying at least a first offering from an on-line vendor and a second offering from an on-line vendor that match the search parameter, wherein each offering has associated with it a revenue estimated to be generated for the first entity and a hyperlink to a website affiliated with the offering;

       estimating a first click likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will click on the hyperlink for the first offering and calculating an estimated first click revenue using the first click likelihood and a fee to be paid to the first entity in the event the user clicks on the hyperlink for the first offering;

       estimating a second click likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will click on the hyperlink for the second offering and calculating an estimated second click revenue using the second click likelihood and a fee to be paid to the first entity in the event the user clicks on the hyperlink for the second offering; and

       comparing the estimated revenues associated with the offerings and ranking, with the ranking module, the first offering relative to the second offering so as to increase income received by the first entity;

       wherein the estimated revenues comprise click revenues associated with the offerings.

2-4.   (Canceled)

5.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

       calculating an estimated first purchase commission revenue that corresponds to the commission received by the first entity when a user purchases an item offered in the first offering; and

calculating an estimated second purchase commission revenue that corresponds to the commission received by the first entity when a user purchases an item offered in the second offering;

wherein the estimated revenues comprise purchase commission revenues associated with the offerings.

6.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 5, wherein calculating an estimated first purchase commission revenue further comprises estimating a first purchase likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will purchase the item offered in the first offering.

7.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 6, wherein calculating an estimated second purchase commission revenue further comprises estimating a second purchase likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will purchase the item offered in the second offering.

8.   (Withdrawn) A method of ranking offerings offered by at least one on-line vendor, comprising:

operating a ranking website affiliated with a first entity;

receiving a term entered by a user;

identifying at least a first offering from an on-line vendor and another offering that match the term, wherein each offering has associated with it a revenue estimated to be generated for the first entity and a link to information relating to the offering;

estimating, with the ranking website, a first click likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that a user will click on the link for the first offering;

calculating, with the ranking website, an estimated first click revenue using the first click likelihood and a fee to be received by the first entity when the user clicks on the link for the first offering; and

comparing the estimated revenues associated with the offerings and ranking, with the ranking website, the first offering relative to the other offering so as to increase income received by the first entity;

wherein the estimated revenue associated with the first offering comprises the first click revenue.

9.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 8, further comprising:

estimating, with the ranking website, a second click likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will click on the link for a second offering from an on-line vendor; and

calculating, with the ranking website, an estimated second click revenue using the second click likelihood and a fee to be received by the first entity when the user clicks on the link for the second offering;

wherein the estimated revenue associated with the second offering comprises the second click revenue.

10.   (Withdrawn) A method of operating a ranking website affiliated with a first entity to rank offerings offered by at least one on-line vendor, wherein each offering has associated with it a revenue estimated to be generated for the first entity, the method comprising:

estimating, with the ranking website, a first purchase likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that a user will click on a link and purchase an item offered in a first offering from an on-line vendor;

calculating, with the ranking website, an estimated first purchase commission revenue using the first purchase likelihood and a commission to be received by the first entity when the user purchases the item offered in the first offering; and

comparing the estimated revenues associated with the offerings and ranking, with the ranking website, the first offering relative to another offering so as to increase income received by the first entity;

wherein the estimated revenue associated with the first offering comprises the first purchase commission revenue.

11.   (Withdrawn) The method of claim 10, further comprising:

estimating, with the ranking website, a second purchase likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will click on a link and purchase an item offered in a second offering from an on-line vendor; and

calculating, with the ranking website, an estimated second purchase commission revenue using the second purchase likelihood and a commission to be received by the first entity when the user purchases the item offered in the second offering;

wherein the estimated revenue associated with the second offering comprises the second purchase commission revenue.

12.   (Currently Amended) A method of operating a ranking website affiliated with a first entity to rank hyperlinks to websites affiliated with at least one on-line vendor, wherein each hyperlink has associated with it a revenue estimated to be generated for the first entity by a user interacting with the website of the hyperlink, the method comprising:

estimating, with the ranking website, a first click likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that a user will click on a first hyperlink to a website affiliated with an on-line vendor;

calculating, with the ranking website, an estimated first click revenue using the first click likelihood and a fee to be received by the first entity when the user clicks on the first hyperlink;

estimating, with the ranking website, a first purchase likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will purchase an item offered on the website associated with the first hyperlink;

calculating, with the ranking website, an estimated first purchase commission revenue using the first purchase likelihood and a commission to be received by the first entity when the user purchases the item offered on the website associated with the first hyperlink; and

comparing the estimated revenues associated with the a plurality of hyperlinks and ranking, with the ranking website, the first hyperlink relative to another hyperlink so as to increase income received by the first entity; and

<u>displaying to the user a higher ranking hyperlink before a lower ranking</u> <u>hyperlink;</u>

wherein the estimated revenue associated with the first hyperlink includes the estimated first click revenue and the estimated first purchase commission revenue.

13.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 12, further comprising:

estimating, with the ranking website, a second click likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will click on a second hyperlink to a website affiliated with an on-line vendor;

calculating, with the ranking website, an estimated second click revenue using the second click likelihood and a fee to be received by the first entity when the user clicks on the second hyperlink;

estimating, with the ranking website, a second purchase likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will purchase an item offered on the website associated with the second hyperlink; and

calculating, with the ranking website, an estimated second purchase commission revenue using the second purchase likelihood and a commission to be received by the first entity when the user purchases the item offered on the website associated with the second hyperlink;

wherein the estimated revenue associated with the second hyperlink includes the estimated second click revenue and the estimated second purchase commission revenue.

14.   (Currently Amended) A method of operating a website having a ranking module affiliated with a first entity that ranks referrals to at least one on-line vendor, wherein each referral has associated with it a revenue estimated to be generated for the first entity <u>by a user interacting with the referral</u>, the method comprising:

estimating a first click likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that a user will click on a first referral to an on-line vendor;

calculating an estimated first click revenue using the first click likelihood and a fee to be received by the first entity when the user clicks on the first referral;

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estimating a first purchase likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will purchase an item mentioned in the first referral;

calculating an estimated first purchase commission revenue using the first purchase likelihood and a commission to be received by the first entity when the user purchases the item mentioned in the first referral;

estimating a second click likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will click on a second referral to an on-line vendor;

calculating an estimated second click revenue using the second click likelihood and a fee to be received by the first entity when the user clicks on the second referral;

estimating a second purchase likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will purchase an item mentioned in the second referral;

calculating an estimated second purchase commission revenue using the second purchase likelihood and a commission to be received by the first entity when the user purchases the item mentioned in the second referral;

comparing the estimated revenues associated with the a plurality of referrals and ranking with the ranking module the first referral relative to the second referral so as to increase income received by the first entity, wherein an estimated revenue associated with a referral includes the estimated click revenue and the estimated purchase commission revenue for the referral; and

displaying the first referral and the second referral at positions on a website according to their ranking such that the user is more likely to click on a referral having a higher rank than to click on a referral having a lower rank.

15.   (Withdrawn) A system that ranks offerings offered by at least one on-line vendor, comprising:

a first offering from an on-line vendor that matches a search parameter;

a second offering from an on-line vendor that matches the search parameter; and

a ranking module stored in a computer readable storage medium, wherein the ranking module is affiliated with a first entity, and wherein the ranking module estimates a first click likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will click

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on the first offering and calculates an estimated first click revenue using the first click likelihood and a fee to be received by the first entity when a user clicks on the first offering; estimates a second click likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will click on the second offering and calculates an estimated second click revenue using the second click likelihood and a fee to be received by the first entity when a user clicks on the second offering; and compares the estimated revenues associated with the offerings and ranks the first offering relative to the second offering so as to increase income received by the first entity,

wherein the estimated revenues comprise click revenues associated with the offerings.

16-17. (Canceled)

18.   (Withdrawn) The system of claim 15, wherein:

the ranking module calculates an estimated first purchase commission revenue that corresponds to the commission received by the first entity when a user purchases an item offered in the first offering; and

the ranking module calculates an estimated second purchase commission revenue that corresponds to the commission received by the first entity when a user purchases an item offered in the second offering;

wherein the estimated revenues comprise purchase commission revenues associated with the offerings.

19.   (Withdrawn) The system of claim 18, wherein:

for calculating the estimated first commission revenue, the ranking module estimates a first purchase likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will purchase the item offered in the first offering; and

for calculating the estimated second commission revenue, the ranking module estimates a second purchase likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will purchase the item offered in the second offering.

20.   (Withdrawn) A system affiliated with a first entity that ranks offerings offered by at least one on-line vendor, wherein each offering has associated with it a

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revenue estimated to be generated for the first entity and a hyperlink to a website affiliated with the offering, comprising:

a first offering from an on-line vendor that matches a search parameter;

a second offering from an on-line vendor that matches the search parameter; and

a ranking module stored in a computer readable storage medium, wherein the ranking module:

estimates a first click likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that a user will click on the hyperlink for the first offering,

calculates an estimated first click revenue using the first click likelihood and a fee to be received by the first entity when the user clicks on the hyperlink for the first offering,

estimates a second click likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will click on the hyperlink for the second offering,

calculates an estimated second click revenue using the second click likelihood and a fee to be received by the first entity when the user clicks on the hyperlink for the second offering, and

compares the estimated revenues associated with the offerings and ranks the first offering relative to the second offering so as to increase income received by the first entity;

wherein the estimated revenues comprise click revenues associated with the offerings.

21. (Withdrawn) A system affiliated with a first entity that ranks offerings offered by at least one on-line vendor, wherein each offering has associated with it a revenue estimated to be generated for the first entity, comprising:

a first offering from an on-line vendor;

a second offering from an on-line vendor; and

a ranking module stored in a computer readable storage medium, wherein the ranking module:

estimates a first purchase likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that a user will click on a hyperlink associated with the first offering and purchase an item offered in the first offering,

calculates an estimated first purchase commission revenue using the first purchase likelihood and a commission to be received by the first entity when the user purchases the item offered in the first offering,

estimates a second purchase likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will click on a hyperlink associated with the second offering and purchase an item offered in the second offering,

calculates an estimated second purchase commission revenue using the second purchase likelihood and a commission received by the first entity when the user purchases the item offered in the second offering, and

compares the estimated revenues associated with the offerings and ranks the first offering relative to the second offering so as to increase income received by the first entity;

wherein the estimated revenues comprise purchase commission revenues associated with the offerings.

22.   (Withdrawn) A system affiliated with a first entity that ranks offerings offered by at least one on-line vendor, wherein each offering has associated with it a revenue estimated to be generated for the first entity, comprising:

a first offering from an on-line vendor;

a second offering from an on-line vendor; and

a ranking module stored in a computer readable storage medium, wherein the ranking module:

estimates a first click likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that a user will click on the first offering,

calculates an estimated first click revenue using the first click likelihood and a fee to be received by the first entity when the user clicks on the first offering,

estimates a first purchase likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will purchase an item offered in the first offering,

calculates an estimated first purchase commission revenue using the first purchase likelihood and a commission to be received by the first entity when the user purchases the item offered in the first offering,

estimates a second click likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will click on the second offering,

calculates an estimated second click revenue using the second click likelihood and a fee to be received by the first entity when the user clicks on the second offering,

estimates a second purchase likelihood that corresponds to the likelihood that the user will purchase an item offered in the second offering,

calculates an estimated second purchase commission revenue using the second purchase likelihood and a commission to be received by the first entity when the user purchases the item offered in the second offering, and

compares the estimated revenues associated with the offerings and ranks the first offering relative to the second offering so as to increase income received by the first entity;

wherein an estimated revenue associated with an offering includes the estimated click revenue and the estimated purchase commission revenue for the offering.

23.   (New) The method of claim 12, wherein the estimated revenue associated with the first hyperlink also includes a fee to be received by the first entity when the first hyperlink is displayed to a user.

24.   (New) The method of claim 12, wherein the purchase commission comprises at least one of a flat fee and a percentage of the price of a purchased item.

25.   (New) The method of claim 12, wherein at least one of the click likelihood and the purchase likelihood is based on user history data.

26.   (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the user history data is weighted by at least one of weighing recent user history data more heavily than older user history

data, and weighing user history data regarding users with a similar demographic background to a current user more heavily than other user history data.

27. (New) The method of claim 12, further comprising:

receiving a search parameter entered by a user;

wherein hyperlinks to be ranked link to websites of on-line vendors with offerings matching the search parameter.

28. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein the ranked hyperlinks that are displayed to the user are displayed in a list.

29. (New) The method of claim 28, wherein the ranked hyperlinks that are displayed to the user have associated with them respective displayed vendor logo images.

30. (New) The method of claim 14, wherein the estimated revenue associated with a referral also includes a fee to be received by the first entity when the referral is displayed to a user.

31. (New) The method of claim 14, wherein the purchase commission comprises at least one of a flat fee and a percentage of the price of a purchased item.

32. (New) The method of claim 14, wherein at least one of the click likelihood and the purchase likelihood is based on user history data.

33. (New) The method of claim 32, wherein the user history data is weighted by at least one of weighing recent user history data more heavily than older user history data, and weighing user history data regarding users with a similar demographic background to a current user more heavily than other user history data.

34. (New) The method of claim 14, further comprising:

receiving a term entered by a user;

wherein referrals to be ranked link to on-line vendors with offerings matching the term entered by the user.

35.   (New) The method of claim 14, wherein the ranked referrals that are displayed to the user are displayed in a list.

36.   (New) The method of claim 35, wherein the ranked referrals that are displayed to the user have associated with them respective displayed vendor logo images.